

**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

Claims 1-20 are pending in the present application. With this amendment, claims 1, 3, 7, 10, 13, and 19 have been amended. Reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested.

**I. 35 U.S.C. § 102, Anticipation**

The Examiner has rejected claims 7-10 and 12-15 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,505,176 issued to *DeFrancesco*. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 7 has been amended to describe the workflow including nodes that may be skipped. Recovery nodes indicate points in the workflow where skipped nodes are executed.

Claim 10 has been amended to describe means for establishing a node in the workflow that may be skipped. There are points on the workflow where transactions that were part of the skipped node are executed.

Claim 13 has been amended to describe designating at least one node in the workflow that may be skipped during the execution of the workflow. A recovery node is designated that indicates a re-execution point in the workflow where the persons in charge of a previously skipped node re-execute the business processes of that node.

The Examiner refers to the teachings of *DeFrancesco* that describe a step being either waived or skipped. When a step is either waived or skipped, that step is never executed.

Applicants' claims describe nodes that may be skipped. The claims now describe points in the workflow where nodes that were originally skipped are executed.

*DeFrancesco* does not teach re-executing skipped or waived steps.

*DeFrancesco* teaches completion tests. These tests are used to determine if normal tests have been completed. Skipped tests are skipped, and thus, are never completed. Therefore, the completion test is never run on a skipped step. Similarly, waived tests are not completed.

*DeFrancesco* clearly depicts the three tests that can be defined for a normal test. Figure 4 depicts the tests as being "skip", "completion", and "exception". If the skip tests determine that a step is skipped, that skipped step is not re-executed. Completion tests are used to test whether a normal step, which has not been skipped, has finished its processing.

For example, column 13, lines 29-38, states: "For a normal step 414, the SYNC method will examine the skip tests 422, to determine if the step should be skipped. If the process step is not skipped then the completion tests 422 are examined. If all the completion tests pass, this indicates that the process step is now complete and the status 416 changes from incomplete to complete. If any of the completion tests are FALSE, the process step is not complete and the status 416 remains unchanged and incomplete."

As this section shows, the completion tests are executed if the skip tests do not indicate that the step is skipped.

The Examiner states that *DeFrancesco* teaches that a step of the workflow design can be either waived or skipped. The Examiner goes on to state that a process that does not have a status of "complete" is re-performed until it is designated as being completed. Applicants disagree. The only steps that run until a status of complete is achieved are those steps that are not skipped. As discussed above, the completion tests are not run on steps that are either skipped or waived. The completion tests run on normal steps that have not been waived or skipped.

Because *DeFrancesco* does not teach all of the features of Applicants' claims, *DeFrancesco* does not anticipate Applicants' claims.

The remaining claims depend from the independent claims discussed above and are believed to be patentable for the reasons given above.

## II. 35 U.S.C. § 103, Obviousness

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-6, 11, and 16-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over *DeFrancesco* in view of U.S. Patent 6,349,238 issued to *Gabbita*. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 has been amended to describe activities that may be skipped and re-execution points in the workflow where previously skipped activities are executed.

Claim 3 has been amended to describe means for skipping part of the process flow by skipping one of the operators to whom a transaction is assigned and means for reassigning the skipped transaction to the skipped operator wherein the skipped transaction is executed.

Claim 5 has not been amended. Claim 5 describes skipping the transaction assigned to a person and then assigning re-execution of the transaction to the skipped person. The re-execution is assigned at a predetermined timing in the workflow.

Claim 16 has not been amended. Claim 16 describes skipping the transaction assigned to a person and then assigning re-execution of the transaction to the skipped person. The re-execution is assigned at a predetermined timing in the workflow.

Claim 19 has been amended to describe indicating that at least one of the nodes of the workflow may be skipped if the business processes of the node cannot be completed when the workflow defines that the node is to be executed. The recovery node is established where the persons in charge of skipped nodes re-execute the business processes.

Claim 20 has not been amended. Claim 20 describes skipping one or more activities assigned to persons, and assigning re-execution of the skipped activities to the persons whose assigned activities have been skipped.

The Examiner states that *DeFrancesco* teaches re-performing skipped activities. The Examiner goes on to state that *DeFrancesco* does not teach performing reassignment of the activities. The Examiner relies on *Gabbita* to teach the features believed missing from *DeFrancesco*.

The Examiner relies on column 3, lines 7-14, and column 29, lines 20-67, as teaching reassigning workflow processes. These sections of *Gabbita* teach a user being able to transfer and re-assign a workflow step. The user can use a remote workstation to do this.

Applicants' claim 1 describes re-execution points in the workflow where previously skipped activities are executed. These skipped activities are those that were skipped. As discussed above, *DeFrancesco* does not teach executing skipped activities. *Gabbita* also does not teach executing skipped activities. *Gabbita* teaches merely that a user can transfer a workflow step and assign it to another. Transferring a workflow step is not the same as executing activities that were skipped.

The combination of *DeFrancesco* and *Gabbita* does not teach executing previously skipped steps. Neither reference teaches executing skipped steps; therefore, the combination cannot teach executing previously skipped steps.

Claim 3 has been amended to describe means for skipping part of the process flow by skipping one of the operators to whom a transaction is assigned and means for reassigning the skipped transaction to the skipped operator wherein the skipped transaction is executed.

Claim 3 describes reassigning the skipped transaction to the same operator that was skipped. This is the operator to whom the transaction was assigned. Neither reference teaches this feature. *Gabbita* teaches transferring a step. *Gabbita* does not teach reassigning a skipped transaction to the same operator that was skipped to whom the transaction had originally been assigned.

According to claim 3, the skipped transaction is executed. As discussed above, neither reference, nor the combination of the references, teaches this feature. Further, neither reference, nor the combination of the references, teaches reassigning a skipped transaction to the same operator that was skipped to whom the transaction had originally been assigned.

Claims 5, 16, 19, and 20 describe features that are similar to the features discussed above and are patentable for the reasons given above.

Because neither reference, nor combination of references, teaches the features of Applicants' claims, the combination of *DeFrancesco* and *Gabbita* does not render Applicants' claims obvious.

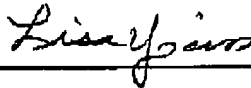
**III. Conclusion**

It is respectfully urged that the subject application is patentable over the cited prior art and is now in condition for allowance.

The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number if in the opinion of the Examiner such a telephone conference would expedite or aid the prosecution and examination of this application.

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Respectfully submitted,



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